

February 11, 2014

Dear Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in support of Bill 25 and Bill 26 for Early Childhood, and ask for your support as well.

- Please support the creation and funding of Office of Early Childhood. This Office will be instrumental in coordination and implementation of new and existing early childhood programs.
- Please support the movement towards universal pre-k, and flexible funding to achieve universal pre-k and maintain and improve quality.
- Support rate increases for early childhood programs which are long overdue and are essential to maintain and improve quality.

There is no better investment than investing in our children, who are the future of this country and will be participants and decision makers in our global economy. As a parent my motto has always been, "Pay now or pay later" and "Little kids little problems: big kids big problems."

These hold true for supporting the OEC that will provide necessary services to children and their families.

"At birth, your child's brain is only 25% developed and they have BILLIONS of cells that haven't even been connected into working networks. By the time they are 3 years old, their brain has developed about 100 THOUSAND TRILLION connections. Think of the brain as the organ of behavior, feelings/emotions, intelligence, creativity and values. How the brain is encoded during these first years of brain development establish life-long patterns for peace or for violence; for love or for hate; for mental excellence or mental mediocrity; for creative social harmony or for social alienation and discord. It is during this critical period (the first 8 years) when enriched environments and increased stimulation can have the greatest impact on brain development. Learning at any age should be meaningful. Meaningful learning in Early Childhood happens through play and exploration." <http://www.icanteachmychild.com/2011/06/brain-development-early-years-matter/>

This link is also evidence of the benefits of supporting quality Early Childhood programs:

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/12/20/leaning-in-and-leaning-on-public-investments-in-education.html>

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter,

Gail Dandelske
Project Site Director, School Readiness
NHPS